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**GUIOMAR NOVAES**  
**PIANO**



**CHOPIN**

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Opus 11

*Bamberg Symphony Orchestra*

*Jonel Perlea, cond.*



# CHOPIN

## PIANO CONCERTO #1 IN E MINOR, OP. 11

GUIOMAR NOVAES, Piano  
Bamberg Symphony Orchestra  
JONEL PERLEA, Conductor

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Frederick Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor, No. 1, was really the second in order of composition; but since it was published before the F minor it was labelled the First. It was dedicated to "M. Fr. Kalkbrenner," and therein lies a story. Chopin had not met Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1784-1849), one of the great piano virtuosos and teachers of the day, when he composed this concerto in 1830. But the German pianist had an immense reputation, and in his now forgotten compositions for the instrument he had done yeoman work in advancing the romantic piano technique. Some scholars have suggested that Kalkbrenner's D minor Piano Concerto (Op. 61) served as something of a model for Chopin's E minor recorded here. (But there is a closer relationship between the E minor and Hummel's A minor, even in thematic relationship.)

Anyway, when Chopin finally came to Paris, which was Kalkbrenner's home at the time, one of the very first things he did was look up that great man, with the idea of taking lessons from him. Chopin had a decided artistic crush on him, and wrote home letters that were nearly hysterical. "You would not believe how curious I was about Herz, Liszt, Hiller, etc.—" he wrote to his friend Titus Wojciechowski in December, 1831. "They are all zero beside Kalkbrenner. I confess that I have played like Herz, but would wish to play like Kalkbrenner. If Paganini is perfection, Kalkbrenner is his equal, but in quite another style . . . He is a giant . . ." And so on, for page after page. Chopin played before him; and Kalkbrenner, from the depths of his wisdom, told Chopin that he had talent but that three years of study with him, Kalkbrenner, would really make something out of the newcomer to Paris. Fortunately Chopin thought the better of it, realizing that his style had already been formed and that perhaps Kalkbrenner might inhibit it. And so nothing much came of the project. After a while, the hero-worshipping Chopin realized that Kalkbrenner was not all he was claimed to be, and that there were much greater artists in the vicinity.

Chopin had some interesting words to say about his E minor Concerto. In a letter to Titus he described the slow movement as "not meant to be loud; it's more of a romance, quiet, melancholy; it should give the impression of gazing tenderly at a place which brings to mind a thousand dear memories. It is a sort of meditation in beautiful spring weather, but by moonlight. That is why I have muted the accompaniment . . ." Apparently Chopin composed the work backwards — the last movement first, the Romanza and last of all the Allegro. By August 21, 1830, the Concerto was finished. Chopin described the Rondo as "effective," the first movement as "powerful." It received its première in Warsaw at a concert on October 11. Chopin, of course, was at the piano. The following day he described his reaction to Titus: "Yesterday's concert was a success; I haste to let you know. I inform your Lordship that I was not a bit, not a bit nervous, and played the way I play when I'm alone, and it went well. First Goerner's Symphony. Then my noble self's Allegro in E minor, which I just reeled off; one can do that on the Streycher piano. Furious applause." It was the horrible custom in those days to break up concerto movements, and after the allegro a soprano appeared to sing an aria. Then Chopin finished his Concerto, which was well received.

For over a hundred years the work has continued to be well received. In its way the score is a miracle. Consider: Chopin composed it in his youth, in Warsaw, before he really had been exposed to the musical culture of his day. And, in 1830, there were no real models to work from. Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt — they had not yet appeared on the scene. The Kalkbrenners, Herzs, Huentens, Hummels — those were the big men at the time. Yet somehow Chopin managed to evolve for himself a distinctive pianistic and compositional style — and it was a style that scarcely changed to his dying day. To all intents and purposes, the E minor Concerto is mature Chopin, with an idiosyncratic style of writing that he never improved upon. Like most of his early compositions (and many of his later ones) it has a strong nationalistic feeling, and the finale is almost a collection of Polish dances even if the melodies were

invented by Chopin. It is a bubbling, effervescent Concerto—and, incidentally, one of the most difficult in the repertory — with some of Chopin's finest thematic material. Its form, which adheres to the classical sonata, is not particularly tight, nor does the orchestration make any pretense at being inventive. But nobody has ever been known to complain. The E minor Concerto is one of those pieces of music that everybody is happy to accept on its own terms — the terms of a young genius.

Notes by CHARLES STANLEY



From her childhood *Guiomar Novaes*, who was born in Brazil, revealed a great talent for the piano, appearing when only seven years of age in public concert in Sao Paulo.

After several years of study she evinced such exceptional talent that she was sent to Europe to perfect her art at the Paris Conservatoire, where very shortly after her arrival she took first prize among the large number of contestants representing many nations of the world. In the first examination she played Schumann's Carnival and Chopin's Third Ballad. Her interpretation and technique so impressed the jury that at the second examination she was requested by Fauré, Debussy and Moszkowski to repeat the Ballad. The verdict of the jury was unanimous, and for two years Novaes was placed under the tuition of Isidore Philipp, the eminent pianist and pedagogue. At the end of her second year she received a Premier Prix du Conservatoire, was offered engagements to play in France, England, Switzerland, Germany and Italy, and was enthusiastically received everywhere.

After a visit to her home in Brazil, Novaes was on the point of returning to Europe, but she came to America instead.

Thus the legend of *Guiomar Novaes* has become a reality in this country too. Her amazing art has grown apace with the years of her maturity, and today she is one of the world's greatest pianists.



VOX

FREDERICK CHOPIN  
PIANO CONCERTO #1  
IN E MINOR, Op. 11  
(concluded)  
Movement 2: Romanze  
Movement 3: Rondo vivace

STPL 510.710

Side 2  
23:05 min.

GUIOMAR NOVAES, piano  
BAMBERG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
JONEL PERLEA, conductor

STPL 510.710 B  
(S-258-B)

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